

# Parks, Recreation & Open Space

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Enjoying time outdoors by ourselves or with others is one way many people have of getting away from daily troubles. Parks and open spaces provide a place where people can relax and interact with others outside of a work environment. Recreation centers are other important places where people can participate in activities that take their mind off their worries. Communities throughout the US recognize the importance of recreational opportunities for personal growth and community development. Public recreation centers and parks are provided at low or no cost to users to ensure equal access.

The POCD for the Town of Enfield discusses parks, recreation and open space to understand better the specific role and condition of parks, recreation and open space in the community. This chapter presents an inventory of parks, open space and recreational programs operated by the Town. The chapter discusses the jurisdictional and administrative framework that governs many of the recreational resources presented. A map is included to show the location of all parks, recreation centers, trails and open spaces and the way in which they are interconnected. The chapter concludes with a summary of findings for the Plan.

## Parks

### *Policies, Plans and Studies*

#### *State Plan of Conservation and Development 2005-2010*

The State Plan of Conservation and Development (S-POCD) uses a systematic approach to land use planning. One of the main ideas expressed in it is that a greater balance and connectivity should exist between built and natural areas. Park development should be a key element of neighborhood revitalization, and restoration of natural features in urban areas is encouraged. This should help to make nature and passive recreation accessible to persons earning low-income or who are transit-dependent or otherwise disadvantaged. The Plan also mentions that natural features in urban areas have potential for being the focus of local environmental education programs. In regards to undeveloped areas, the Plan recommends using design techniques that leave a portion of the site undeveloped or minimally developed for passive recreation as a way to mitigate a development's negative impact on the area and any sensitive resources.

#### *Town of Enfield 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development*

The Town POCD lists a series of goals, objectives and recommendations regarding the town's natural resources, agricultural lands and open space areas, as well as recreational facilities and programs.

With regards to parks and recreational facilities, the goal is to provide an adequate amount, variety and distribution of recreational facilities, but objectives are only focused on maintenance and enhancement of existing facilities. Consequently, recommendations are focused on improvements needed for town parks, school fields and community centers and improvements to the parks administration and communication system. There is apparently a need to be more efficient when working with Board of Education, the State DOT and DEP. The recommendations, however, list new sidewalks, pedestrian and bike trails, and community centers.

***Townwide Facilities Planning Phase, Recreation Facilities Improvements Project***

This study identified three main users of Enfield's recreational facilities: schools, sports leagues and the general public. The study found that Enfield residents perceive that existing recreational facilities do not meet their needs. Many park facilities in town are designed and available mostly for organized sports, and there is a need for unstructured recreation space for other users. The public identified need for picnicking, sledding, kite flying areas and trails for walking, biking canoeing and kayaking. They also mentioned community gardens, dog parks, band shells, bird sanctuaries, and regulatory and informational signage.

Sports fields are overused because they are used by school and town teams for physical education classes, team practices and tournaments. The general public uses these fields as well for unstructured activities (i.e. "pick me up games") when available.<sup>146</sup> League sports had need for additional football and soccer facilities in order to fulfill needs in 2000. Improvements to pedestrian amenities and circulation were determined to be needed. Maintenance was noted as a concern should facilities be expanded or new ones created and population or use projections are not fulfilled. Proper field/court lighting needed for night games and permanent concession stands for town teams who do fundraising through concessions. Drainage is also an issue in many fields and for many teams. One of the key recommendations was creating a central sports facility to ease scheduling of field use and maintenance as well as making it easier for families with children in multiple teams to attend games.<sup>147</sup>

The study found that there are many informal trails throughout town, but no formal pedestrian/bike trails; and that there is a desire to increase public access to riverfront areas. The Plan mentioned that there has been consideration of acquiring land along the river to connect with the Scantic River Greenway. The Connecticut River Greenway does not extend all the way to Enfield, but there has been consideration of connecting the town to neighboring communities.

The study identified six priority sites for improvements: Powder Hollow Bowl, Green Manor, Brainerd Park, Asnuntuck Community Technical College, Mancuso Park and Shaker Recreation Area. Most of the improvements to these parks involved wildlife habitat and historic resource interpretive signage, play areas and parking areas.

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<sup>146</sup> Town of Enfield. Phase I – Townwide Facilities Planning Phase. Recreation Facilities Improvements Project. November 2000.

<sup>147</sup> Town of Enfield. Phase I – Townwide Facilities Planning Phase. Recreation Facilities Improvements Project. November 2000.

## Park Inventory

The Town of Enfield has 28 publicly owned recreation facilities. These facilities occupy 465 acres. In addition, there are 5 privately owned facilities available for public use. The Department of Public Works and the Recreation Department co-share in parks and recreation programs and facilities.

**Table 45 Enfield's Recreation Facilities**

Code	Name	Description	Quantity	Total Acres
MP	Mini Park	Small, specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or a specific group, such as a tot lot for young children	0	0
PG	Playground	Areas to fulfill the play needs of children between six and fourteen years of age, often located at or near elementary school sites	2	8.61
PF	Playfield	Areas to fulfill the recreational needs of older children and adults, often located at or near junior or senior high schools	11	300.8
NP	Neighborhood Park	Areas for active and/or passive recreation, generally large enough to provide for a variety of activities, located within neighborhoods for easy access	8	84
CP	Community Park	Similar to neighborhood parks but larger in scale, often with unique natural features or special features that serve the entire municipal population	3	65.23
SA	Special Area	Areas devoted to special uses (golf courses, beaches, and other unique facilities) or natural areas preserved as open space	4	7
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>28</b>	<b>465.64</b>
Source: Town of Enfield, Connecticut. Plan of Conservation & Development. May 20, 1999. Pg. 66				

## Needs Analysis

**Table 46 Park Types and Acreage Needed Based on NRPA Standards**

Park Type	Park Size	Ideal Acres Per 1,000 Persons	Ideal Acres <sup>1</sup>	Current Acres <sup>2</sup>	Acres Needed
Mini	≤ 1	0.25 - 0.50	11.30 - 22.60	1	10.30 - 21.60
Neighborhood	1.1 - 15	1 - 2	45.21 - 90.42	85.91	0 - 4.51
Community	15.1 - 25	5 - 8	226.06 - 361.69	97.15	128.91 - 264.54
Regional	25.1 - 200	10+	452.12 +	281.58	170.54 +
<sup>1</sup> These values are based on acres per person times the total population of the Town (45,212).					
Source: 1999 Town of Enfield Plan of Conservation and Development, US Census 2000, NRPA and peter j smith & company, inc.					

The previous table creates a classification of parks that is based on the size of the park. The table then shows a standard for the amount of space needed to accommodate 1,000 persons in each type of park. This can be

used to estimate how much space per person is appropriate given the town's total population. The total amount of parkland in town can then be compared to the ideal amount of space that should be used for each type of park. This gives the Town an idea of how much additional parkland is needed to provide the ideal amount of park space. While other factors need to be considered in order to make a more accurate determination of the community's recreational needs, this analysis provides a rough, first idea of how well current needs are met. In this case, the table shows that there is adequate supply of neighborhood parks. The supply of mini parks, community parks and regional parks is deficient and should be examined more closely.

## Recreation Facilities & Programs

Recreation facilities in the Town of Enfield are managed by the Department of Buildings and Grounds, which also coordinates scheduling the use of Town sports fields. Recreation programs are organized by the Recreation Department, which is located in the Angelo Lamagna Center at 19 North Main Street.

Enfield's recreation programs are available to Town residents and non-residents; however, non-residents can participate based on space availability and must wait to enroll 1 week after the registration period for residents. Year-round activities include swimming, martial arts, art and performing art lessons; and cooking and science activities, preschool playgroups. The Department also offers babysitter and lifeguard training programs. Most programs are geared to children and teenagers, but there are adult programs as well. Programs for adults and whole families include town-sponsored bus trips to several cities and events in the region. There are frequently trips to New York City, Boston and Springfield to see Yankees and Red Sox games, do sightseeing, and Broadway shows.

The Recreation Department's busy season is in the summer, when there are activities in the Lamagna Center and at various outdoor locations. During the summer, the Department offers all of its year-round activities, plus outdoor movie nights. Summer-only activities include half and full day camps with different activities or sports activities. Sport camps are offered in Enfield Public Schools facilities. The Department also rents "picnic packs" to families.

### *Partnerships*

The Recreation Department publicizes its programs by sending brochures to every home with students attending public schools in grades K-8. The Department would like to reach more town residents and is exploring other ways distribute these brochures including: direct mail, newspaper insert, bulk pick-up locations. The Recreation Department has also been working with the Scantic River Watershed Association, a local non-profit, to expand their hiking and conservation activities along the Scantic River.

A private non-profit volunteer group with support from various Town agencies and private contributors organizes the Town's Fourth of July celebration, one of the few activities to attract the community to the Thompsonville area. This celebration showcases local restaurants, artists and businesses with events like Taste of Enfield and Enfield Expo. There are also sport events, a parade, a carnival, a fishing derby, concerts and activities for children. Unique activities organized during other seasons include a torchlight parade, carol singing, house lighting contest, and a parents' holiday night out.

### *Issues*

Recreation Department and the Planning and Zoning Department Staff indicated that there is a strong bias towards sports in Enfield. As a result, of all the necessary projects identified in the Town's Recreation Facilities Improvements Project – Phase I Townwide Planning Phase of 2000, only school athletic field

upgrades have been completed. Development of other facilities, particularly for passive outdoor recreation, has not been addressed yet.

There is also the problem that adults want swimming opportunities too, but most times the pool is scheduled for children's lessons. The pools at schools are limited in size. There also appears to be a need for more classes for seniors and meeting space for community groups.

The Recreation Department currently shares the Lamagna Center with other community service agencies and the Police Department. The size of the building is not enough to comfortably accommodate all agencies. Parking is not sufficient either to accommodate employees and visitors. For this reason, the Recreation Department staff has indicated that it would be ideal to have their own building. According to the Planning and Zoning Department, the Recreation Department has a property on Prospect St. that is used as a storage facility and has room for expansion. The facility was an old horse stable, which is deemed to be one of the most intact and stable historic structures in the area. Relocating the Recreation Department here would give them more space and help to preserve a unique historic building.

Recreation Department Staff observe that participation in their programs has increased as families look for more affordable recreation alternatives. They expect participation to keep growing in the next couple of years as families weather the national economic downturn and realize how inexpensive public recreation programs are. However, this will put more strains on staff. The Department's workload is more than what the current number of employees can handle. The Recreation Department currently has 3 full-time staff and over 70 volunteers for the basketball program. Seasonal or part-time staff is hired as needed, but budget constraints make volunteers' help vital to the Department's operations.

In terms of funding, their money comes from the town budget. They charge for all the programs, but starting on July 1<sup>st</sup> the Department will be able to keep extra cash they make in a special revenue fund.

## Trails

### *Policies, Plans & Studies*

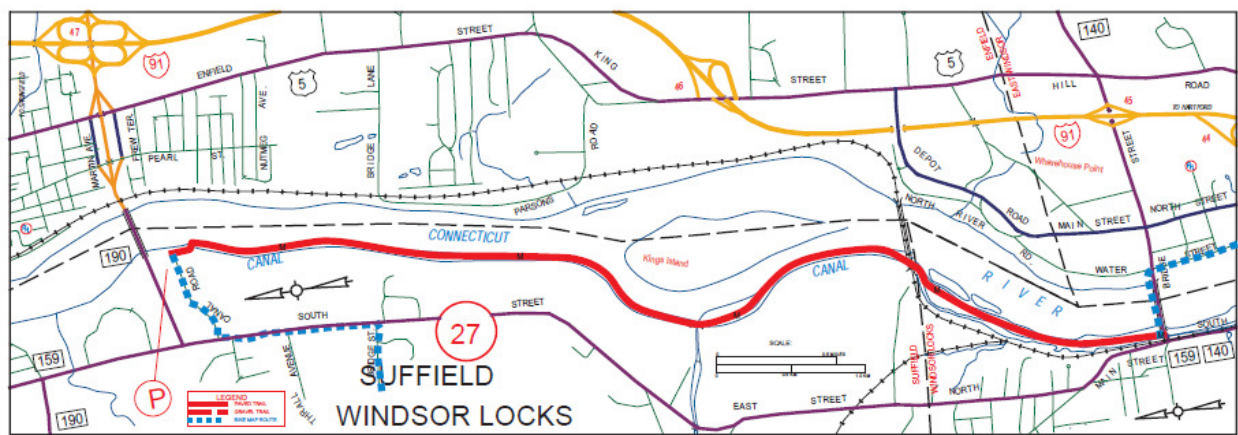
#### *State Plan of Conservation & Development 2005-2010*

The State POCD has a number of policies to address trail development in Connecticut. The Plan conceives of trails as a necessary link between built and natural areas, and specifically recommends that trails link revitalization areas and main streets to river corridors and greenways, and affordable and mixed-income housing areas. The Plan encourages communities to create links between them and neighboring greenways, regional trails and open spaces, and other available corridors whenever possible. The Scantic River Park is listed in the State POCD as one of the state's official state greenways.

#### *Connecticut Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan*

The Connecticut Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is a statewide master plan used to further develop infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. The Plan explains the benefits of supporting the development of a non-polluting, non-motorized means of transportation, citing positive impacts to individual and environmental health. Safety is an important objective, so the Plan recommends separating bike lanes from the main roadway when feasible, and allowing enough space and visibility on sidewalks and on paths between buildings to minimize unexpected conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles.

The Plan includes maps of existing and proposed locations for pedestrian and cyclist routes. There is a trail system along the Connecticut River, but it completely bypasses the Town of Enfield. As shown on Figure 46, the trail system does not cross over the river in Enfield.

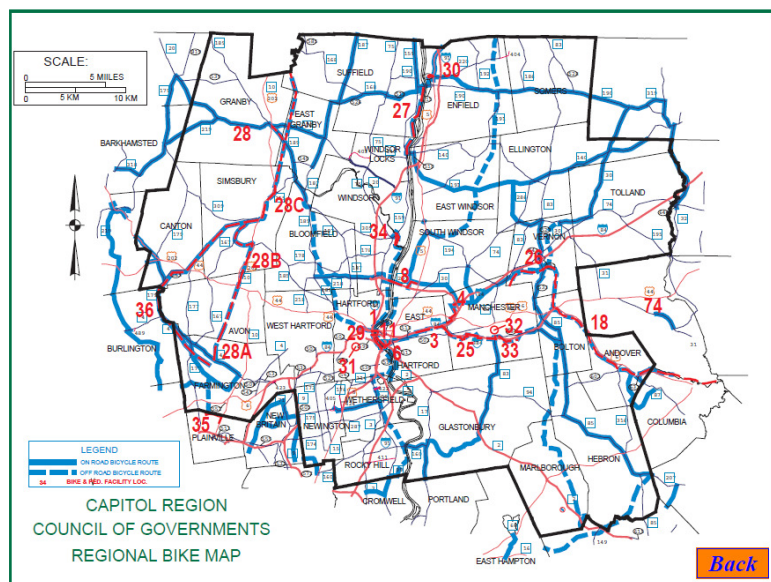


**Figure 45** Trail along the Connecticut River in the Towns of Suffield and East Windsor. On this map, the solid red lines represent paved trails; red dashed lines, gravel trails; and blue dotted lines, bike trails. Source State Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan.

### *Capitol Region Transportation Plan: A guide for transportation investments through 2035*

This plan has policies recognizing that the public right-of-way must serve all users, not just motor vehicles. It also says that one of the goals is to build upon the interregional greenway system.

As shown on Figure 47, there is an off-road bicycle route on the eastern portion of the Town of Enfield, which connects the town to Massachusetts and East Windsor. There are also two on-road bike routes: one east-west route connecting Enfield to Suffield and Somers, and one north south route connecting the town to Suffield, Windsor Locks and East Windsor. The east-west on-road intersects with the off-road route, almost forming a loop from river to countryside.



**Figure 46** Regional bike route network. Solid blue lines show on road bicycle routes; dashed blue lines show off road bicycle routes; and red numbers show bike and pedestrian facilities.



### *Draft 2005 Connecticut Recreational Trails Plan*

The Draft 2005 Recreational Trails Plan is a status report on the state's progress creating a system of recreational trails. The Plan describes the main community and user group issues related to trail development and use, and it presents a series of goals and objectives for trail management and funding trail projects that address issues raised by the public.

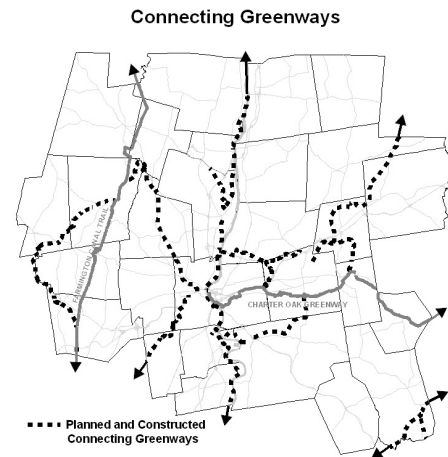
As of September 2005, there are over 1,000 miles of trails in the state. The trails go through public, private, federal, state and municipal lands.

One of the Plan's goals is to make a continuous, statewide trail system. This goal stems from the knowledge of the tendency of long-distance trails (regional, statewide and interstate) to attract a greater number of users and visitors. To achieve this, the state has prioritized acquiring trail segments that can complete existing trails, especially if the property is within the Blue Blazed Trail System. Another reason acquiring land is to reduce the threat of losing private trails to changes in ownership or to development.

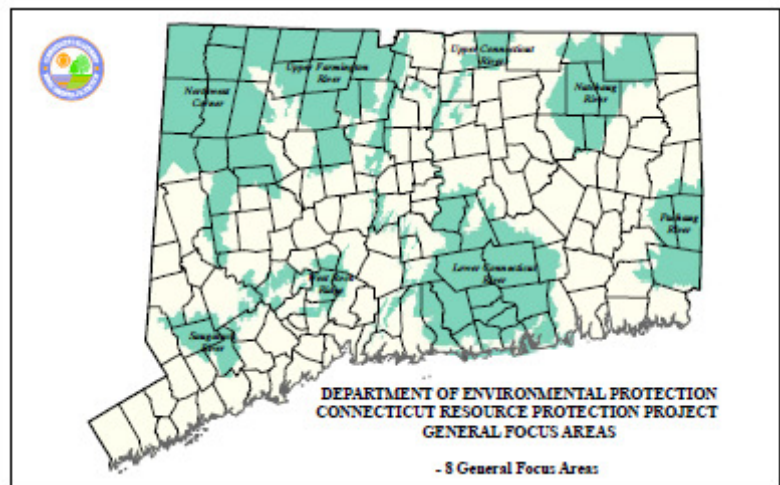
Another goal is developing multi-purpose trails that can accommodate a greater variety of users (including ATV, mountain bikers, horseback riders), not just hikers. This goal is significant for two reasons: several user groups are critically underserved (which often leads to illegal use of trails).<sup>148</sup> In addition to multi-purpose trails, providing parking and access to people with disabilities and creating blueways along streams and rivers are considered part of the strategy.

One of the greenways listed is the Scantic River Park, which "encompasses land along the Scantic River, providing a critical link in a corridor connecting Somers, Enfield, East Windsor, and South Windsor. The Scantic River corridor has been identified by the DEP as a resource protection area."

Figure 49 shows that the Scantic River Greenway is the only state-designated greenway in Enfield, which clearly stands isolated from



**Figure 47** This image shows a network of existing and planned greenways throughout Connecticut, but no linkages to the Town of Enfield. Source: 2007 Capitol Region Transportation Plan.



**Figure 48** Resource Protection Areas in Connecticut – This map from the SCORP shows the southeastern part of Enfield and the Connecticut River waterfront to be part of the State's focus areas for environmental protection.

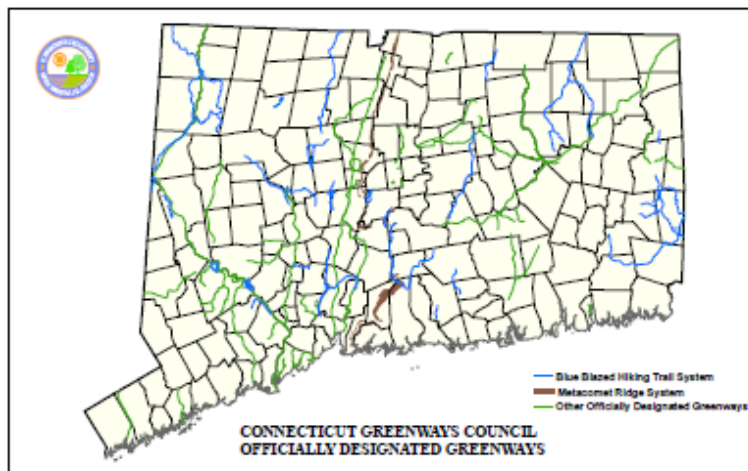
<sup>148</sup> State Parks Division, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Draft Connecticut Recreational Trails Plan. September 2005.

other greenways. In 2009, the officially designated greenway along the Scantic River was extended to include its entire length in Enfield.<sup>149</sup>

Powder Hollow is the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the Scantic Spring Splash Canoe Race, held annually in March and attracting paddlers from all over the east coast. The section is not suitable for novice paddlers and certain areas can be portaged or scouted after the dam at Springborn Labs (approximately a 2 mile stretch). Other parts of the Scantic River in Enfield are not navigable. The first section of the canoe trail begins in Somersville.

### *Other organizations*

Approximately 700 miles are part of the Blue Blazed Trail System managed by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. The Connecticut Forest and Park Association is an important state partner because it organizes many volunteers who help in trail maintenance and many landowners who preserve open space and grant public access through their properties. Only hiking is allowed in Blue Blazed trails that are maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.<sup>150</sup>



**Figure 49 Greenways in Connecticut**

### *Funding*

The Connecticut Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which administers funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), awards grants to state and local agencies and organizations based on the priorities listed in the Plan.<sup>151</sup>

## Open Spaces

“In 1992, the Connecticut Greenway Committee was established by the Governor. This committee, made up of citizens from every part of Connecticut was directed to develop a detailed proposal for a permanent Greenway program, which would provide assistance to municipalities and private organizations. The Greenway Committee defines greenways as follows:

*“Greenway: A corridor of open space that may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources, offer recreational opportunities, and provide a place for people to walk, bicycle and move from place to place.*

<sup>149</sup> Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2005-2010.

<sup>150</sup> State Parks Division, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Draft Connecticut Recreational Trails Plan. September 2005.

<sup>151</sup> State Parks Division, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Draft Connecticut Recreational Trails Plan. September 2005.



Greenways can be located along a waterway or other defining natural feature, such as a ridgeline, or along a man-made corridor such as an unused right-of-way, abandoned town road, woods road, or historic barge canal. A greenway can be a greenspace along a highway or around a village. Greenways can provide the “missing links” to connect existing protected areas, and to give people convenient accesses to the outdoors. A greenway can be as wide as a river valley or as narrow as an abandoned rail bed.

Greenways can serve many purposes. Rural greenways can preserve natural habitats and wildlife migration routes, encourage restoration of environmentally valuable landscapes, and support both recreational and educational programs. In our cities and suburbs, greenways can encompass both natural and man-made features, and they are a way for communities to create convenient access to local attractions, fresh air and green lands.”<sup>152</sup>

## *Agencies & Organizations*

The Town has representatives in the **Connecticut River Assembly**, which reviews and comments on applications pertaining to land use within the Connecticut River conservation zone. This assembly is a group of 14 towns and meets monthly.

The **Conservation Commission** is the Town of Enfield’s advisory body on open space and farmland conservation matters. While it does not have regulatory powers, it issues opinions for consideration by other commissions and proposals for approval by the Town Council. The Conservation Commission’s other responsibilities include maintaining an inventory of protected open space and farmland, and identifying lands for potential public acquisition (through fee simple purchase or conservation easements), and promoting the community’s resources. The Commission has been involved in efforts to protect land along the Scantic River, obtaining official Connecticut Greenways Council greenway designations, and organizing educational forums with the Northern Connecticut Land Trust. The Commission has stated its support of Town plans to provide public access and protected open space along the Connecticut River adjacent to rail line.

## *Policies, Plans & Studies*

### *State Conservation and Development Policies Plan 2005-2010*

The State Conservation and Development Policies Plan acknowledged the multiple values of undeveloped lands, whether they are public or privately owned. According to the Plan, protected open space is valuable as an outdoor recreation resource, and it can attract regional tourism, enhance communities’ quality of life amenities, and have positive effects on health.

Due to the rapid pace of land consumption, acquisition of open space is a state priority. By acquiring open space, the state guarantees that (1) the land will remain undeveloped and (2) building will be minimal, occurring only as necessary to provide public access, and keeping with the character of the place. The Plan set a goal and a timeline for acquiring open space: Acquire 21% of the total land area of the state by 2023. The goal is then split into two directives: 10% is to be acquired by the state government, and 11% will be acquired by municipalities, private non-profits and water utilities with state assistance.

In spite of this, the state is aware of its limited “ability to compete with development in setting aside land [which] leaves an undesirable margin for environmental degradation.”<sup>153</sup> The Plan reminds other agencies

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<sup>152</sup> Connecticut Statewide Pedestrian & Bicycle Transportation Plan. Chapter 6.

<sup>153</sup> Office of Policy and Management, State of Connecticut. Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005-2010. Pg. 56

and the public “acquisition will not be the only tool required to protect natural resources in the future. Coordinated efforts combining acquisitions with easements, public education, regulation, and technical assistance to landowners will be increasingly vital...”<sup>154</sup> The Plan also defined the use of those properties, indicating that the state’s policy is that protected open space should be multi-purpose and allow it to be used for the long term, and be available to the public.

### ***State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2005-2010***

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is a study of supply and demand of recreational facilities and activities in Connecticut. The study considers not just state-owned property, but also municipal, federal, educational, land trust, wildlife viewing and commercial recreation facilities or sites.

One of the most significant elements of the SCORP is its insight to state residents’ recreational preferences. As part of the planning process, a user demand survey was conducted with members of the general public, expert/avid recreationists, and local officials. According to the survey, 93.8% percent of all survey participants engaged in land-based activities, 85.3% water-based activities, and 54.2% in winter activities. The most popular activities were:

- Walking, running, hiking (UFI 95.3)
- Beach activities (UFI 62)
- Visiting historic sites and museums (UFI 36.7)
- Swimming (UFI 62-54, depending on swimming facility)
- Biking (UFI 40.9)
- Bird and wildlife watching (No UFI given)
- Sledding (UFI 26.8)
- Camping (UFI 20)
- Canoeing, kayaking, tubing (UFI 20.8)

These activities are listed in decreasing order by the number of people that participate in them. In parenthesis, the use frequency index (UFI) is given to indicate how often survey participants are engaged in these activities. The activities with both a higher number of participants and a higher UFI are the activities with the highest demand throughout the entire State of Connecticut. On the other hand, many people who participated in the study indicated that they do not partake in recreational activities for some of the following reasons:

- Not knowing what is being offered (36.3%)
- Not knowing the location of facilities (27.3%)
- Facilities too far from their residences (23.1%)
- Fees are too high (17.6%)
- Facilities are not well maintained (15.4%)
- Individuals lack a personal interest in recreation (11.8%)

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<sup>154</sup> Office of Policy and Management, State of Connecticut. Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005-2010. Pg. 58

The inventory of recreational facilities is incomplete due to differences in the availability data locally; but the study does mention that, the state average level of service for open space is 6 persons per acre of open space or 166 acres of open space for every thousand persons.

According to the public, maintenance and improvement of existing facilities is needed, but additional facilities that can support the activities listed previously is also important. Local officials add that most existing recreational facilities adequately meet the needs of adults between the ages of 19 to 54, but neglect the needs of younger children, teenagers and older adults.

The study identified the participant's top three priorities were: maintenance and improvement of existing facilities (59%); acquisition of more open space (47%); and development of new outdoor recreation facilities (45%). In addition, it mentioned that the state DEP will also prioritize multi-use trail development, particularly if it closes the gap between individual trails within the state's trail network.

The significance of these findings for the Town of Enfield is the opportunity to align its priorities and projects to those of the State. The study explains that DEP will select project requesting grant funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) based on an "open project selection process" that evaluates each project using a rating and ranking criteria based on the recommendations, strategies and priorities of the 2005-2010 SCORP.

### ***The Green Plan: Guiding Land Acquisition and Protection in Connecticut 2007-2012***

The Green Plan is a document that provides further detail about the approach used to meet the state's 21% open space acquisition goal. This plan lists the state open space goals, threats and challenges, priorities for acquisition and protection, programs and funding available, and outlines the process. "With a total of 3,205,760 acres in Connecticut, 673,210 acres must be preserved to meet the goal." The Plan's priorities for acquiring open space are: properties that provide water access, natural areas, scenic and historically significant properties, greenways, forests, special opportunity purchases. The acquisition program was set with a timeline and end date of 2023. As of January 1, 2007, the state has acquired 78% of the land acreage goal. The exact acreage protected by state government partners has not been compiled, but it is estimated to be 229,798 acres.<sup>155</sup>

Some of the challenges involved in acquiring open space are: landowner's financial flexibility, location, character and size of parcel, current property values at the time of sale/donation. These factors affect per acre cost. Another challenge is providing long term stewardship or management of protected lands. Non-profits cannot use grant funds for management of the area after it has been purchased.

### ***Scantic River State Park Master Plan of 1989***

A feasibility and suitability study for the Scantic River State Park was completed in 1968. This plan recommended preserving the floodplain as open space and creating a central recreation complex in Enfield. The recreation plan was never implemented due to fiscal constraints, except for a total of 326 acres that were acquired by the State. The master planning study resumed efforts to create the park, and public input meetings were held in all municipalities intersected by the Scantic River. These meetings revealed that Enfield residents wanted group camping, fishing, swimming, hiking, biking and historic interpretation facilities at the park. The study found that swimming was unsuitable due to the characteristics of the river and conflicts with state policy on natural resource-based recreation. Feasible activities and facilities included interpretive facilities at Powder Hollow, floodplain acquisition, fishing, hiking and biking trails. The total

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<sup>155</sup> The Green Plan: Guiding Land Acquisition and Protection in Connecticut 2007-2012. Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. September 2007. Pg. 3

cost of land acquisition was estimated at \$2 to 3 million; facilities development at \$8 million; staffing at \$75,000 and equipment at \$90,000.

### ***Town of Enfield 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development***

The Town POCD lists a series of goals, objectives and recommendations regarding the town's natural resources, agricultural lands and open space areas, as well as recreational facilities and programs.

Due to the Town's physical characteristics, topography and aquatic resources are the main focus of many of the Plan's goals. A key objective is to protect water quality and prevent flooding hazards by using land use regulations such as overlay zoning, use and area restrictions and acquisition of vacant riverfront land as preferred tools. The plan also recognizes the value of agricultural lands as open space and has the objective to prevent the loss of large tracts of farmland. It recommends protecting farmland through existing state programs like purchase of development rights, or town acquisition of specific development rights.

Creating an open space network in which corridors (greenways, walking and biking trails) link destination sites, neighborhoods, parks and schools is a large component of the Plan. Most recommendations involve acquiring land through a public entity such as the Town or State of Connecticut. The recommendations list several strategies to consider, including establishing a municipal source of funds for open space acquisition, leasing or exchange programs. Another recommendation was creating local laws that enable state property tax incentive laws.

### ***A Program of Action: Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Enfield***

This report was completed as a joint effort between the Town of Enfield Conservation Commission, the Town of Enfield Planning and Community Development Department, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments. It was prepared with funding from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and conducted simultaneously with the Town of Suffield's open space and farmland preservation planning process.

The key arguments for open space and farmland protection in Enfield are centered on the following ideas:

- Humans derive satisfaction from the natural world, therefore natural areas improve quality of life,
- The town has unique natural resources,
- Open space and farmland require less public expenditures than other land uses, and
- Protected open space and farmland can actually generate revenue

The report suggested that:

- Open space preservation is not a priority;
- The community is concerned about the effectiveness of existing land preservation programs;
- Elected and appointed leaders and staff lack of knowledge of the regulations they are tasked with enforcing; and
- The town lacks a decision-making process that integrates many disciplines and is representative of a broad range of community interests.

The report explored different strategies and planning tools that could be used for open space and farmland preservation in Enfield; and provided an initial list of projects and target properties. The report identified 50 properties that should be targeted for preservation within the Connecticut River, Scantic River, Beeman's Brook, Route 190 corridor, South Maple Rd., Abbe Rd., Powder Hill Rd., King's Island, Enfield

Dam area, the former Town landfill and certain utility landholdings. The plan recommended creating a greenway system that is linked to educational facilities; has good access points to trails and fishing spots; and acts as a buffer between different land uses.

The report also suggested that open space preservation would be more effective if the Town collaborated with other public entities and private organizations. Collaboration would help obtain and maximize funding, acquire real estate property or property rights, ensure adequate protection of wildlife and habitat, and develop recreation and tourism amenities. Unfortunately, the Town Council never adopted this Plan, preventing the Planning and Zoning Department from institutionalizing the Plan's policies, and the Conservation Commission from moving forward with the Plan's priority projects.

## Findings

- Time and time again, Enfield residents express that existing recreational facilities do not meet their needs. On one hand, there is a need for more unstructured or passive recreation opportunities. On the other, the sport fields need to be shared better between users and maintained in good conditions.
- A recurring issue is poor working relationship with other government agencies such as the Board of Education, the State DOT and DEP. Effective liaisons are needed in order to secure funding and push through open space projects that have long been talked about, but not completed.
- Recreational trails are scattered throughout the Town of Enfield. They are not interconnected and have limited accessibility. Furthermore, many town residents are unaware of their existence. Public outreach and education about the town's available open spaces and trails is long overdue, despite a growing demand for them.
- There is limited access to the town's main waterways, the Connecticut River and the Scantic River. Boat launches, waterfront trails are needed as well as a comprehensive system of signs to guide residents and visitors to those recreational areas.
- According to a need analysis based on NRPA standards, the Town of Enfield needs small pocket parks throughout the town, as well as large open spaces in order to meet the recreational needs of the population.
- The SCORP results suggest that Enfield's problems with lack of information about recreational facilities and the activities offered are not just local, but part of a trend throughout the entire state. This presents an opportunity for Enfield to develop projects that would give more visibility to its parks and open spaces and seek funds available through the state that would help the state simultaneously achieve its own goals as stated in the SCORP.
- The State of Connecticut has plans to develop long-distance trails along the Scantic River. The Town can take advantage of this initiative and apply for funds that may be available for hiking and blueway trail development.
- State plans indicate that land acquisition is the most common strategy of open space conservation. It is also costly, but not the only alternative. Municipalities such as Enfield have many opportunities to develop alternative open space conservation programs through partnerships with private landowners, state purchase of development rights, among others. The Town needs to explore this further and ensure that its land use policies and regulations promote open space conservation. While there is no guideline as to the open space protection goals at the local level, all open space conservation efforts in Enfield would be contributing to the state's conservation goals.





## Legend

	Protected Open Space		Boat Launch		Roads
	Public Open Space		Public School		Railroad
	Scantic River State Park (CT DEP)		Trail		Surface Water
	Private Open Space				Town Boundary

Note: Open Space is compiled from: (1) DEP Property (CT DEP 2/2009), (2) Municipal and Private Open Space (CT DEP, 1997), (3) Town Property No Buildings (Town of Enfield GIS, 2008); Private Open Space source: Land Use, 2009 Update (Town of Enfield GIS, 2009); Protected Open Space includes (1) land identified by DEP Protected Open Space Mapping Project (CT DEP, 2009) and (2) water company land identified in Enfield's land use data as watershed land.



# Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan of Conservation & Development - Town of Enfield, CT

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